

FRANKLIN BEEKEEPERS CLUB NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2011/JANUARY2012

PRES. PETER BILAND **SEC. GRAHAM WHEELER**
State highway 22 PO box 1082,
R D 1, PAPA KURA PUKEKOHE 2340
09 294 8365 09 2391177
Peter_biland@hotmail.com franklinbeekeepers@gmail.com

Editor; roelf@slingshot.co.nz



© Franklin Beekeepers Club, 2007

President's report

The October club day at the apiary was attended by 32 people- the largest number we have had for a long time. It was very encouraging to see so many interested folk.

Next year, rather than attend the A & P Society show in February at Pukekohe, the club will participate in the Karaka Vintage Day on 1st April. This gives us a little longer to get your honey ready for sale as well as providing a change of venue. We will be looking for assistance from members to staff the stand and more details of this will be provided as we get closer to the event next year. In the mean time just make a note of the date. Over recent years we have alternated between the two shows.

Quite a number of phone calls have come through over the last few weeks about swarms hanging about in people's gardens- or cow-sheds. Many have been collected by club members and grateful thanks goes to them. The public attitude has noticeably changed over the years as more awareness of the general plight of bees has been publicised and fewer people are going directly to the pest exterminators. Usually the exterminators will destroy a bee colony only as a last resort after contacting a beekeeper.

If anyone wants to collect swarms- a cheap way of adding to our apiary, who has not already let me know, give me a call. Ideally you need to quarantine the arrivals for a couple of months then check them carefully for anything odd.

For those of you who are really keen on record keeping, note the international colour codes for the age of the queen as set out below. The Years column is the terminal digit of the year, eg white is 2011.

	Colour	Years
When	White	1 & 6
You	Yellow	2 & 7
Requeen	Red	3 & 8
Get the	Green	4 & 9
Best	Blue	5 & 0

Many of you may have heard on the radio or seen on TV the story of bee-hive thefts in Northland. This is serious, not only for the direct loss but also for possible spread of disease. So be aware.

Remember too to check your girls to make sure they have enough space for both brood and nectar.

Peter Biland.

Hivemasters Report

I wish to report that the club hives are in good shape after our club day for november. The split that I had done the previous month had taken successfully and

is now a strong hive. The hive next to the solar wax melter was suspect as it had hardly no brood or very little and so will deal with this hive on our December meeting. The parent hive of the split was just average. I think we have done well to date considering the very late treatment of varroa and losing a few hives. This was partly due to me now living out of Pukekohe and my offside beeing very busy of late. Just remember that people who do not make mistakes never learn anything from them .I wish all members a HAPPY CHRISTMAS and a PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR.
Peter.Smith

From the Secretary

Well after a hectic 2 months in the UK, we are back, and into a the spring weather (does it ever stop blowing) Len kindly expanded my top bar hive when it looked like over flowing , and the bees have settled down to, hopefully, fill it with honey, The club has decided to try a topbar hive, so Peter B and I installed it last week, so we are now looking for a swarm to start it (HINT, HINT)

Two others have been made over the winter so that makes 6 topbars owned by club members now,

Lets hope the powers to be, sort out this stupid wrangle re inspections soon,
Cheers, Graham

Warning: large bees seen in local garden, anyone seeing the hive please run.



Native bees are better pollinators than honey bees

By Krisy Gashler

(PhysOrg.com) -- The honey bee has hogged the pollination spotlight for centuries, but native bees are now getting their fair share of buzz: They are two to three times better pollinators than honeybees, are more plentiful than previously thought and not as prone to the headline-catching colony collapse disorder that has decimated honeybee populations, says Cornell entomology professor Bryan Danforth.

He is one of a dozen researchers across the Northeast involved in a five-year, \$3.3 million project to study whether the pathogens, viruses and fungi that are harming the honeybee also affect native bee species. The grant, led by Anne Averill of the University of Massachusetts-Amherst, will also investigate how native bee abundance and diversity are influenced by the size, pesticide use, landscape and crop diversity on farms.

Danforth is also the lead researcher on a four-year, \$450,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agriculture and Food Research Initiative that will fund research on native bee species abundance in New York state apple orchards.

His findings so far are "very good news" for New York apple farmers, who contribute nearly \$261 million per year to the state economy. Along with graduate student Mia Park and postdoctoral researcher Eleanor Blitzer, Danforth discovered that native bees are actually more effective pollinators than the honey bee -- "two to three times better," he said.

"An individual visit by a native bee is actually worth far more than an individual visit by a honey bee," Danforth added. "Honey bees are more interested in the nectar. They don't really want the pollen if they can avoid it. The wild, native bees are mostly pollen collectors. They are collecting the pollen to take back to their nests."

A graduate student Mia Park works on the native bee research project. Her work focuses on understanding how the landscape surrounding apple orchards impacts the native bee fauna and comparing per-visit pollen deposition of native bees and honey bees.

They are also more plentiful than once thought. In 25 surveyed orchards near Ithaca and Lake Ontario, Danforth and his team expected to find 40-50 native bee species, and they found almost 100.

Honey bees are considered valuable because, unlike most native species, they can be moved from farm to farm. For example, honey bees are critical in pollinating California almond fields in February when there are no native bees around, Danforth said.

To attract a swarm to the hive, put it out during the swarming season, Baiting the hive with a few drops of lemon grass oil will improve your chances of attracting a swarm.



EU bans GM-contaminated honey from general sale

Bavarian beekeepers forced to declare their honey as genetically modified because of contamination from nearby Monsanto crops.

The European Union's highest court on Tuesday ruled that honey which contains trace amounts of pollen from genetically modified (GM) corn must be labelled as GM produce and undergo full safety authorisation before it can be sold as food.

In what green groups are calling a "groundbreaking" ruling, the decision could force the EU to strengthen its already near-zero tolerance policy on genetically modified organisms (GMOs).

Bavarian beekeepers, some 500m from a test field for a modified maize crop developed by Monsanto - one of only two GM crops authorised as safe to be cultivated in Europe - claimed their honey had been "contaminated" by pollen from the plant.

The European court of justice found in their favour, a ruling that should offer grounds for the beekeepers to claim compensation in a German court.

But the court's finding also potentially threatens recent EU legislation, introduced in July this year, that permits traces of GMOs in animal feed without a safety review.

Mute Schimpf, food campaigner for Friends of the Earth Europe, said that the ruling "would confirm that existing laws allowing traces of unauthorised GM contamination are insufficient and would need revising."

French Green MEP José Bové, an ex-farmer well-known for his destruction of a McDonald's franchise in the south of France and the uprooting of GM crops in Brazil, said that the only protection farmers can have is for a complete ban on GMOs in Europe. "Beekeepers are powerless to prevent the contamination of their honey by GM pollen, as farmers are for their crops, and thus powerless to prevent the tainting of the foodstuffs they produce and the integrity of their product.

"The only sure way to prevent this is by precluding the cultivation of GMOs." Greenpeace, describing the traces of pollen in the honey as "genetic pollution" said that Monsanto and the Bavarian state should be held liable for the beekeepers' losses as a result of their product having to be labelled as containing GMOs. However, agricultural specialists criticised the ruling, saying that the decision has no grounding in science.

Guy Poppy, the director of the centre for biological sciences at the University of Southampton, told the Guardian: "There is no safety issue. This honey is as safe as any other."

The corn in question is genetically engineered to produce an insecticide that naturally occurs in the soil bacterium *Bacillus thuringiensis* (BT). The production of this toxin protects the maize plants from European corn borer larvae.

"The Monsanto maize is genetically modified to produce the BT protein. But this same protein actually has been regularly used for years as a spray even by organic farmers," he added.

"The consequences of these sorts of ruling is that new methods of plant breeding, whether GM or other forms that are developed, could be thrown out of potential use, making it impossible to innovate."

Vivian Moses, professor of biotechnology at the University of London and the chairwoman of CropGen, an advisory group on GM foods, said: "These beekeepers believe that there is a sensitivity among consumers of the presence of GM material, that the honey containing GM loses quality. They are just protecting their economic interest.

"But scientifically this doesn't add up to anything, as the crop has been judged as safe for human consumption."

In response to the ruling, the European commission will in two weeks discuss the issue of GMOs and honey with EU member states.

According to Brussels, it is likely that the decision will have an impact on the honey into the EU as Europe does not itself produce sufficient quantities for the size of the market. The bloc produces 200,000 tonnes per year and must import an additional 140,000 tonnes.

Argentina and China, both GM-friendly countries and the two biggest importers of honey into the EU, are likely to be affected in particular, the commission warned.

"The honey is not dangerous. There is no health risk from honey in the EU," insisted EU consumer protection spokesman, Frédéric Vincent, worried that shoppers might stop buying honey as a result of the news.

"It's an important ruling from the court. I can't say at this point whether we need to change any laws," he added. "The contamination is done by the bees themselves. We can't put GPS tracking on the bees."

Dates to Remember

Sunday December 11th, 2011

Venue: At the club hives.

Program: 10.00 am Cuppa and discussion, 10.30 open the hives.

Sunday January 8th 2012

Venue: At the club hives.

Program: 10.00 am Cuppa and discussion, 10.30 open the hives.

Venue at Cub Hives: Rapid Rural 733 on State Highway 22, Paerata. Travelling east along SH22 (from Drury), it is on the left hand side: travelling west (from Puke), it's on the right.

At 733 there is a red letterbox and a driveway that forks- left goes to a house, take the right that travels 100m past old sheds and terminates at a turntable by a disused concrete-block cow-shed. Adjacent to this shed is the apiary site. When visiting the site, please ensure you park on the old turntable, taking care that the driveway is kept clear. **WHEN LEAVING THE SITE, TAKE GREAT CARE JOINING THE TRAFFIC, VEHICLES APPROACHING FROM THE RIGHT ARE NOT THAT EASY TO SEE.**

